

Educational Programs
**for FOOD
RETAILERS**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EXTENSION SERVICE

Division of Agricultural Economics

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EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR FOOD RETAILERS

Extension Develops New Approaches to Agricultural Marketing

The Extension Service is preparing to engage actively and aggressively in educational work with retail handlers of foods, beginning with fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of the States are including projects of this kind in their educational marketing programs, and the U.S.D.A. Extension Service is aiding and encouraging these undertakings where it can.

Throughout the week beginning November 14, 1949, a seminar to consider this development was held in Washington, D. C., under the sponsorship of the Division of Agricultural Economics of the U.S.D.A. Extension Service. The purpose of the conference was to bring together several State extension specialists and others to pool their experiences in these programs with retailers and to enable them to confer with representatives of trade associations and commercial operators who had had experience in this type of work. The group examined and appraised educational materials and methods used in retailer training by various agencies.

The seminar was attended by State extension workers from Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Trade associations represented were the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, the National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Distributors, the National Association of Food Chains, and the National Association of Retail Grocers. The Federal Security Agency, U. S. Office of Education, and the U. S. Department of Commerce were represented. Participants included workers from Production and Marketing Administration, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Research Administration, and the Extension Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Vegetable Advisory Committee (Research and Marketing Act) was represented.

The mobile training unit used for retailer education by the Indiana Extension Service was on display at the annual exhibition of the Trailer Coach Manufacturers Association in Washington at the same time as the seminar, and was demonstrated for the benefit of the conference. Training programs of the other State extension services, of the trade associations and private companies, and of the Office of Education were described.

This report is based on the observations and conclusions of the Extension workers who shared in the seminar.

I. Objectives

The immediate purpose of educational and demonstrational work of this kind is to aid retailers and their employees to become better informed and more skillful, to the end that farm products may move more smoothly through distributive channels, with less waste, less decline in quality, lower costs, better returns to farmers, and greater satisfaction to consumers. Successful programs with fresh produce may be expected to lead to additional programs later with other foods, and with distributors at other levels.

Another Approach to Marketing Problems

Extension recognizes that educational work with the farmer on his farm cannot go the whole way in solving agriculture's marketing problems. Customary educational projects with farmers and agricultural leaders and organizations and first handlers are being supplemented more and more by work with those who handle the farmer's product or use it. The producer's interests are closely tied to those of the distributor and consumer. Uninformed, indifferent, and inefficient operating practices in retail stores interfere with the flow of goods through the marketing channels, and whatever can be done to raise the standards and improve the practices of the personnel in these stores who prepare, display, and sell the product will be sure to benefit all concerned.

Some work with retailers of fruits and vegetables is under way. Two of the national trade associations of wholesalers and jobbers are sponsoring training schools -- the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association is partly supporting such a training program with FMA contract funds, and the National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Distributors is cooperating with the distributive education system provided for by the George-Deen Act of 1936. Private organizations, notably the corporate food chains, conduct training schools and supervise the practices of their own employees. The National Association of Retail Grocers has for many years engaged in broad educational work along these lines. Here and there State departments of agriculture have done so and are doing some service work with retailers. Several of the State extension services have had some experience in this field and others are making a beginning. Both in-service and pre-service training get some attention. For example, among the preparatory programs is a 4-year course in food merchandising and distribution now being established at Michigan State College, sponsored jointly by the college and the National Association of Food Chains. Also important in this connection is the work being done in some of the public schools with the combined support of the U. S. Office of Education and the National League.

Needs Not Yet Fully Met

Nevertheless educational requirements at this critical point in the distribution system are not yet being adequately met. The directive of the Research and Marketing Act of 1946 with respect

to improving the performance of distributors of farm products has not yet been fully implemented.

A measure of the magnitude of the task appears when the rather considerable achievements to date are viewed against the vast numbers engaged in the handling of fresh fruits and vegetables in retail stores in the United States, estimated at about 1,000,000 persons. Probably less than 5 percent of those now working in these retail produce departments have received any instruction or information through all these programs combined. Moreover, under existing conditions the turn-over of retail personnel in the fresh produce business through business failures, discharges, and resignations is extremely high.

The challenging task of improving the skills and broadening the information and understanding of retail handlers of fruits and vegetables still lies mainly ahead. It is a big task, and a continuing one.

It was this conviction that prompted the National League at its convention in Pittsburgh in February, 1949, the Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee (RMA) in April, and the National Association of Retail Grocers in June of that year, to emphasize the need for more work of this nature, and to call on the Extension Service to bring its facilities to bear on the problem.

The logic supporting this development is as follows:

- (1) Retailing is one of the key functions in the distribution of farm products.
- (2) Many retailers and their employees are not well qualified or trained, and operate unskillfully and inefficiently, especially those handling fresh (unprocessed) fruits and vegetables.
- (3) When retail handlers lack proper training, consumers are poorly served, sales volume is small, wastes and costs are excessive, and margins and selling prices have to be high if the retailer is to avoid losses.
- (4) Measures that would bring about greater expertness on the part of retailers would not only contribute to better maintenance of quality, reduced distribution costs, and lower prices to consumers, but would encourage freer flow of food products from farms.
- (5) Effective work already is being done by existing training courses. These have demonstrated that training and education can increase sales and cut wastes. But the combined efforts of these activities have reached not over 5 percent of those engaged currently in retail handling of fresh fruits and vegetables. The problem is so important, so big, so continuous as to call for a much broader attack

upon it than has yet been made.

- (6) The organization and experience of the Extension Service cause it to be especially qualified to develop educational and demonstrational programs with distributors, and it has been called upon by producer and distributor groups to do so.

A Beginning

An encouraging start has been made by Extension. Four States (Florida, Indiana, Maryland, and Wisconsin) have active RMA extension projects under way whose direct purpose is to aid retail handlers of fresh fruits and vegetables to improve their merchandising practices, by means of training classes, meetings, marketing information and aids, demonstrations, and conferences with retailers and their wholesale suppliers. Several other States are including educational work of this nature in their existing marketing programs.

The Federal Extension Service is preparing a preliminary outline suggesting the basic content of an educational program applied to fresh fruits and vegetables, with help and cooperation of several trade associations that have an interest in this matter. Materials and procedures used by agencies with previous experience in this field are being drawn upon. Facilities are being provided to aid the State extension services in their programs in this field. Plans have been made for preparation of educational materials and teaching aids, training of extension specialists in retailer education, workshops, clearance of pertinent information, and other means of helping the States perform this function effectively.

Goals may be thought of as (a) primary and (b) long range. Improvements arising from educational work with retail handlers of fruits and vegetables are sure to inspire demands for retailer education dealing with other foods, and for similar programs with wholesalers and jobbers.

A. Primary goals (perishables):

1. To aid retailers of fresh (unprocessed) fruits and vegetables to become better informed about the farm products they sell and more skillful in handling and merchandising these products, and to reduce the wastes and narrow the margins associated with the retailing function where these are excessive.
2. To encourage consumption of fruits and vegetables by improving their attractiveness, freshness, and quality when offered at retail, and to bring to consumers the benefits of better produce, wider choice, and reasonable prices.
3. To develop on a national scale a corps of well-trained and expert retailers of fresh fruits and vegetables, specialists in this field who may come to be recognized in their respective communities as dependable sources of good produce.

and of reliable information about the produce they handle, and also to attract able and promising young persons into produce retailing as a satisfying and well-paid career.

4. To raise the standards of retailers so as to influence indirectly yet strongly those who supply them, thus bringing about better grading, packaging, and handling of the goods by producers, wholesalers, and jobbers.

B. Long-range goals (other foods, other functions):

1. To bring about similar improvements in --
 - (a) Retail handling and merchandising of other foods (poultry and eggs, dairy products, meats, and so on).
 - (b) Wholesale handling and merchandising.

II. Relations With Other Agencies

Team work in this far-reaching program is fundamental.

Agriculture is increasingly aware that marketing problems often come to focus at the retail level and Extension proposes to give more and more attention to these problems at this point.

Yet Extension has no desire to work alone when joint action with others holds greater promise. Educational needs and opportunities here are so great and so continuous that even under the most favorable circumstances the task cannot be completed in the foreseeable future. Interested agencies working together will certainly make greater progress than separately or competitively. Extension hopes to combine its experience and knowledge and abilities with those of other such agencies wherever possible to add strength and momentum to the attack upon these problems.

As in all extension work, each State or Territory determines its own pattern and accepts responsibility for its own projects, yet the State programs are cooperative with the U.S.D.A. Extension Service. Especially advantageous is this arrangement in the early stages of new work such as this.

The close and harmonious cooperation that generally characterizes relations of the Extension Service with other agencies is singularly appropriate in this undertaking. The educational skill and organization of Extension can be most effective if use is made, wherever possible, of the following:

- (1) Business contacts, experience, incentives, and training activities of commercial distributive interests in this industry.
- (2) Fact-finding facilities of State experiment stations and bureaus in the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor.
- (3) Special talents and experience of the Production and Marketing Administration and State departments of agriculture arising from service and regulatory activities.
- (4) Distributive education facilities of the Office of Education, Federal Security Agency.
- (5) Programs of producer and consumer groups where these are effectively organized.

In any case, educational programs of two or more agencies directed to food retailers can and should be complementary, never competitive. By agreement and planning in common, one may teach specific skills, while another deals more with broad background information. One may operate in the larger

cities, another in smaller towns and remote areas. One may provide a brief, concentrated course of training, while another's educational offerings are continuous. One may emphasize pre-service preparation, another in-service training.

Responsibilities for good working relations among all parties concerned rest partly with the Federal Agency and partly with the State agency.

III. Subject Matter

Detailed preliminary outlines of suggested courses of instruction, training materials, and methods of presentation and use arising from the seminar of November 14 to 19, 1949, are being prepared, and will be available when completed.

In the meantime it is suggested that a program to be effective in any State should comprise at least these seven elements:

- (1) A basic course of instruction, adapted to local needs and conditions.
- (2) Instruction by qualified personnel.
- (3) Wide support and participation by means of State and local advisory committees representing cooperating agencies -- service wholesalers, trade and producer associations, consumer and parent-teacher associations, retail employee groups, public agencies, and others.
- (4) Follow-up visits to trainees in their places of business.
- (5) Subsequent periodical distribution of literature to trainees -- produce manual, reminders, suggestions, fact sheets, inventory and record forms, and the like.
- (6) Completion and adoption of training recognized by issuance of certificates of achievement.
- (7) Judicious use of publicity.

Inasmuch as the intent is to aid retailers to serve agriculture and consumers more efficiently, it is apparent that the basic instruction must be on a broad scale. It should teach the functions and responsibilities of the retailer and his relation to other factors in the system of distribution. It should provide him with the necessary background to recognize the importance of his position and to inspire his pride and ambition. It should aim principally at fundamentals and principles that result in good merchandising practice. It should show him the reasons why certain practices are good and others are bad, making use of demonstrations, skills, audiovisual aids, and other tested teaching techniques to arouse and maintain his interest and understanding and determination to make use of the principles taught.

Careless, rough, inexpert handling of perishables in many retail stores results in needless wastes and losses, and these losses cause the retailer to operate with excessive margins, to discontinue his produce department entirely, or to stock produce only as an inescapable nuisance. In any case, he diverts his attention from perishables to staple items on which his needed profit is easier or surer. Therefore, proper

handling - display, trimming and reconditioning, overnight care, favorable atmospheric conditions, and the like - ought to be included in any program of instruction.

Yet teaching the skills associated with proper physical handling of the goods in the store only partly fulfills the potentials of the program. A comprehensive pattern of education and merchandising aids for food retailers would need to cover as much of the following as possible:

- (1) Sources and availability of supplies - geographical and seasonal characteristics of production.
- (2) Nature of the marketing system - methods and facilities used in distribution - role of the retailer.
- (3) The biological nature of fruits and vegetables.
- (4) Nutritional values and uses of leading items - varietal differences - grades.
- (5) Store floor lay-outs, space, location - relation of produce to other departments - self-service vs. clerk service.
- (6) Equipment - wet and dry racks, ice and mechanical refrigeration, storage, scales, trimming and waste disposal facilities.
- (7) Lighting and ventilation - air conditioning.
- (8) Sanitation - safety measures.
- (9) Display.
- (10) Wastes and losses - care and reconditioning.
- (11) Business principles and merchandising practices -
 - (a) Buying - relations with suppliers.
 - (b) Pricing - economic factors.
 - (c) Costs and margins.
 - (d) Accounting - records.
 - (e) Advertising - selling - customer relations.
 - (f) Management.
 - (g) Personnel recruitment and training.
- (12) Prepackaging - other special functions.

IV. Program Patterns

The nature of Extension's educational work with retailers is likely to vary from State to State, perhaps to some extent even from community to community within a given State. As in other marketing projects, the plan and procedure best adapted to any situation cannot always be foretold with accuracy. Subject matter, methods of presentation, and other characteristics of each project will be influenced by local needs and conditions, availability of qualified extension personnel, the extent to which the instruction is offered to employers or to employees, the kind and degree of local support that can be enlisted, and the amount of time in-service trainees can devote to the instruction.

Programs need to be helpful to all retail grocery operators regardless of the size of the business, from the small independent neighborhood store to and including the corporate chain supermarket. Small retailers justly criticize educational programs whose subject matter pertains only to large chains, and the latter likewise have little interest in educational work addressed primarily to the small operator.

Several types emerging

The programs developed to date present several patterns, distinctive enough to be cataloged separately. Examples are briefly described below.

- (1) A concentrated, continuous 1-day course of instruction, with classes of 6 to 12 persons, dealing mainly with display, physical handling, conditioning, and care of produce, with some attention to margins, pricing, and merchandising aids, and offering demonstration and practice with skills. The course uses a full-size display rack and a full stock of merchandise in a simulated produce department, fixed or mobile. It is offered in cooperation with a local service wholesaler and is supplemented by follow-up visits and the distribution of literature to trainees. The Indiana extension project is of this type, making use of a specially designed highway trailer for the purpose, and charging \$10 per trainee to defray part of the costs. The course offered by the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association through its member companies is likewise of this general type.
- (2) A series of several 2 or 3-hour evening classes, the number of trainees not limited, covering display, physical handling and care, and using token quantities of produce for demonstration. This course also deals with broader background material. It involves cooperation between the State extension service and the State office of distributive education, with the extension specialist planning the course and doing the teaching in distributive

education centers in local schools. There is some follow up. The Maryland Extension project is of this type. The National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Distributors also is encouraging work of this sort.

- (3) The Florida Extension Service is working intensively with a selected group of retailers in one city developing demonstration produce departments with "before and after" records in the hope of raising the standards of these retailers and then using their stores as demonstration units for other retailers in their communities.
- (4) The Extension Services in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and several other States offer instruction and aids to retailers within the framework of a broad educational program in marketing that is aimed at all factors from producer to consumer. Use is made of meetings, literature, news releases by press and radio, and other means. The commodity approach is typical of these programs. They endeavor to improve product quality all the way from producer to consumer. Retailers and other handlers learn more about the physiological functions of plant life, and producers learn more about the problems of retailing.
- (5) In Wisconsin a program has been carried on in Milwaukee County by the county extension staff, with the usual aid that county workers receive from State marketing specialists. The program has consisted of classes and demonstrations principally of physical handling and display methods, with considerable follow-up and publicity designed to improve the retailers' skills. The State extension service is now broadening the program and making it State-wide.
- (6) In Louisville, Ky., a project in consumer education makes use of retail food stores as important media for distribution of recipes and fact sheets to homemakers. The interest of these retailers is good, and the indirect educational effect upon them seems to be considerable.

Common elements of existing programs

Certain elements are common to all these projects:

- (1) The State marketing extension specialists responsible for the instruction are good organizers and teachers, with training and experience in food retailing.
- (2) Opportunities have been created for these specialists to add to their qualifications through occupational experiences and training.
- (3) Planning and conduct of the programs have had the benefit of advisory and working committees, either formally or

informally. The committees have been composed of the agricultural economist, horticulturist, home economist, and other college specialists, together with representatives of some or all of the following off-campus groups: producers, service wholesalers, retailers (chain or independent or both), consumers, retail clerks' organizations, PMA and State bureau of markets inspectors, market news reporters, and others.

- (4) Some of these committee members and others have made contributions as guest teachers from time to time where good use could be made of their special knowledge or abilities, and have helped materially in arousing interest in the program, making advance arrangements, and supplementing the course of instruction by subsequent contacts with trainees.
- (5) Thus far the actual teaching has been mainly the responsibility of the State specialists rather than of the county agents. Agents in the localities where the instruction is scheduled cooperate with the State specialist in publicizing the instruction, soliciting local interest and support, arranging for physical facilities, enrolling prospective trainees, and the like. Some county agents have successfully conducted local programs of this sort, and more are becoming equipped by training and experience for educational work in this highly specialized field.

Pre-service preparation of commercial workers is fully as important as in-service training. In addition to these on-the-job educational programs of the Extension Service, it would be well to encourage more resident college courses and short course offerings leading to food retailing. The training of youths and their motivation to seek a useful place in this business is likely to be even more fruitful in the long run than in-service training alone. 4-H Clubs, FFA chapters, vocational agriculture classes, and other organized youth groups offer means of bringing these opportunities to the attention of young people before their careers have been determined, and furnishing them with the proper background and preparation.

Mobile facilities

Experience with educational units on wheels suggests their use on a fairly extensive scale in connection with this program. Indiana's success with a specially designed highway trailer undoubtedly can be duplicated elsewhere.

One of the transcontinental railroad companies has suggested that when plans and organization are ready, it might be willing to cooperate by equipping and operating a railroad unit of three or four cars as a retailer educational facility for use by the Extension Service at points in all States along its line. Much of the expense would be borne by the railroad company. Strong

support no doubt could be counted on in all localities. Once the program was subjected to trial on this one railroad, it could then be extended to other lines in other areas.

The regional character of a rolling project such as this is clear. Each State traversed by a given mobile unit would need to share in the planning and instruction and follow-up. Responsibility for the continuity and integration of the program would rest on the regional specialist, with aid of the Federal Extension Service.

The dramatic and visual character of such a project, coupled with a high degree of local interest, should make it an effective educational medium. Probably no better means could be devised for quick and lasting results, in three forms -- (a) direct education of retailers, (b) public acceptance of the program and its purpose, and (c) recruitment and training of educational specialists in this field.

V. Recruitment and Training of Extension Personnel

Educators already qualified to teach in this program are not likely to be recruited readily. Those with both the needed academic training and practical experience in retail food merchandising are scarce and in demand by commercial operators.

The farm background and agricultural education that serve customarily as standards in the employment of State extension specialists or county agents, though desirable, are of less importance in this type of extension work than in programs where the worker deals directly with farmers. Actual behind-the-counter experience, on the other hand, is essential. Just as the educator with a practical farm background is able to talk the farmer's language, so the educator who works with the retailer must have the feel of the retail business. In part this may be obtained through occupational experience and in-service training after employment as an extension leader.

Training in marketing is fundamental. An ideal combination of talents would include teaching ability, an agricultural background, and education in business administration, plus some practical experience in the retail field. This suggests that graduates of colleges of commerce or education and persons with the right type of business background should be considered, rather than the restriction of recruitment to graduates of colleges of agriculture alone.

The Federal Extension Service expects to equip itself promptly to assist the States in this connection, especially in the early stages, by helping in the selection and training of leaders upon request. This can be done through regional and national workshops and schools, demonstrations, market tours, conferences, personal consultation, correspondence, and preparation and distribution of news letters and other pertinent literature to workers in the field.

VI. Sources of Materials

There is a growing body of information and teaching aids useful in this field. More literature and reference matter are becoming available from time to time, the increased output apparently being stimulated by the current interest in the importance of the retailing function in the marketing of farm products.

These materials originate with the trade associations, commercial shippers and distributors, and the trade press, in addition to official sources. These latter include such agencies as the Small Business Division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Office of Education of the Federal Security Agency, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, Production and Marketing Administration, and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the extension services, experiment stations, and bureaus of markets in the States, and others.

The following illustrate types of materials available from commercial sources:

- (1) How to Make Money Selling Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, book, 314 pp., illustrated, 1949, published by The Progressive Grocer, 161 Sixth Avenue, New York 13, N.Y.
- (2) Facts in Food and Grocery Distribution, annual bulletin, 24 pp., published by The Progressive Grocer.
- (3) A Guide to Better Handling and More Efficient Merchandising of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, booklet, 48 pp., 1948, published by the National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Distributors, 512 F Street N.W., Washington 1, D. C.
- (4) Merchandising Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Leaders' Manual, 64 pp., 1949, published by National League.
- (5) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Merchandising, monthly magazine, 16 pp., published by George M. Wessells Co., 5225 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 36, Calif., under sponsorship of National League.
- (6) Fruit and Vegetable Facts and Pointers, separate fact sheets on 49 items, mimeographed, published by United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, 2017 S Street NW., Washington 9, D. C.
- (7) California Deciduous Fruits, bulletin, 32 pp., illustrated, 1948, published by California Fruit Exchange, Sacramento, Calif.

- (8) 101 Profitable Ideas for the Fruit Department, bulletin, 48 pp., illustrated, published by California Fruit Growers Exchange, Los Angeles, Calif.
- (9) 27 Modern Display Stand Ideas for the Produce Department, bulletin, 30 pp., illustrated, 1947, published by California Fruit Growers Exchange.
- (10) Produce Pointers, bulletin, 48 pp., illustrated, 1944, published by Chain Store Publishing Corp., 185 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.
- (11) Design for Selling, 32-mm. film strip with accompanying disk record and illustrated script, 1949, National Association of Retail Grocers, 360 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. Other titles in this series: Strategy for Selling, Personnel for Selling, Dollar Garden.
- (12) Selling Produce, 16-mm sound movie film, Fruit Disptach Co., New York, N.Y.
- (13) Pre-Pack-Age, monthly magazine, published by Miller Freeman Publications, Inc., 370 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, N.Y., official publication of Produce Prepackaging Association.

A comprehensive master file of the literature and teaching aids available from commercial and official sources is being assembled by the USDA Extension Service. A complete bibliography of these materials will be distributed later.

VII. Promoting Interest

Experience has shown that success with retailer education projects is unusually dependent upon thorough and judicious advance planning and good public relations. The enthusiastic interest of retailers has to be aroused and maintained. Active support of agencies and organizations with a direct or indirect interest in better retailing is needed. The confidence of all groups has to be gained.

It is not enough that the course be realistic and functional and the instructor skillful. If retailers are to seek and make use of the instruction voluntarily at some sacrifice, either in cash costs or in business time lost, or both, the educational program must be well sold and must stay sold.

Advisory and working committees such as those mentioned in sections III and IV, can be extremely helpful in this connection through personal contacts and otherwise. Exhibits portraying the objectives and results and selected key features of the program may be displayed in appropriate places. A prospectus outlining the project is useful in attaining understanding on the part of prospective enrollees and others. Publicity is essential, through the press, radio, television, meetings, and all other effective means at the disposal of the Extension Service.

VIII. Supplementary Contacts With Trainees

It has been found that a great deal of emphasis needs to be placed on personal conferences with trainees in their places of business following the more or less formal periods of training. Demonstrations and merchandising aids are more effective there than elsewhere and serve to fix the principles and practices taught in the classroom or meetings. Follow-up is fully as important as the original instruction.

Not all of these follow-up contacts need to be nor can they be made by the extension specialist in retailer education alone. Other extension specialists -- marketing economists, home economists, consumer education specialists, horticulturists, engineers -- can help materially at this stage. This mutual cooperation of the Extension workers is an especially effective feature of the program.

Moreover, the off-campus committees that work closely with this educational program can multiply its influence a great deal by helping on the follow-up conferences and demonstrations in an organized way. Exceptionally useful in this connection are the representatives of cooperating service wholesalers who in a selling capacity have frequent contact with their retailer customers.

The periodic or occasional mailing of supplementary information to all trainees by the extension specialist is an inherent feature of the work. This information takes the form of fact sheets, seasonal data on market supplies, suggestions and reminders about merchandising practices, and the like. These are aimed at the interests of the retailer just as the usual "outlook" releases are designed for the needs of the producer.

IX. Evaluation

Many of the results of the program are intangible, long-range, not subject to measurement. Others are more immediate and perceptible. Careful, unbiased appraisal from time to time of those elements that can be evaluated either quantitatively or qualitatively is essential.

The effectiveness of the education and training may be judged to a considerable degree by gaging such factors as the following in selected retail stores of trainees and comparing records made before and after the course of instruction:

- (1) Dollar volume of retail sales, produce and total, adjusted to seasonal differences and changes in price levels and purchasing power of the dollar.
- (2) Volume (quantities) of goods sold.
- (3) Sales per man-hour of retail labor.
- (4) Costs per dollar of sales volume.
- (5) Number of new practices and improvements adopted.
- (6) Number of customers, and area served.
- (7) Average sales of produce and other grocery items per customer.

Less tangible but capable of observation are such factors as these:

- (1) Relations between retailer and suppliers.
- (2) Relations between retailer and consumers.
- (3) Morale of employer and employees.

Some of the evaluation in any State is the direct responsibility of the extension specialist in retailer education in that State, to determine the specific needs of prospective trainees, the extent to which these needs are being met, and what revisions if any should be made in his program. In addition, a more intensive study should be made by the State agricultural experiment station or by qualified research workers in the land-grant college.

In any case, benchmarks are needed from which to measure effectiveness. Studies, in advance of an extension program and at intervals thereafter, would serve to expose problems and opportunities, to furnish a base on which to construct an educational program, and to suggest revision of the program as required.

X. Role of the U.S.D.A. Extension Service

The Federal Extension Service may be counted on to give encouragement to all educational programs designed to improve the distribution and marketing of farm products. Specifically, with respect to the educational work with retailers of fresh fruits and vegetables discussed herein, the Federal Service will, within limits of the funds and personnel available, aid the extension services in the States and Territories in planning and conducting sound extension programs.

The Federal Extension Service will:

- (1) Assemble and evaluate educational and demonstration materials for this purpose -- literature, exhibits, film strips and motion pictures, and other audiovisual aids --and will help to create appropriate materials where needed.
- (2) Serve as a clearing house for facts and ideas.
- (3) Cooperate with the States in developing recommended procedures to be followed by State extension marketing specialists and county agents in connection with these programs.
- (4) Cooperate wherever possible with other agencies, both public and commercial, that have an interest in this field.
- (5) Help the States to recruit and train leaders, especially while the program is in its early developmental stages.
- (6) Conduct pilot demonstrations and workshops or seminars to add to the qualifications of State extension workers and to pool the experiences of these workers.
- (7) Help to develop regional projects where these are appropriate.
- (8) Encourage research where needed (a) to provide factual information for use in teaching programs and to increase retail efficiency and (b) to measure the effectiveness of the educational program.
- (9) Help to introduce Extension to a large new clientele, a group of businessmen and their employees many of whom have had no prior contacts with the Extension Service.

